

KING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND PARKS

PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION

**Island Center Forest Pilot Project
Summary of comments received during public review period
September 2011**

Comment	Response
There were some comments expressing concern of an inequity in allowing a special interest activity to close the park to other uses. Others supported the limited season as an equity measure to allow a limited continuance of an historical recreational use.	This is a pilot project to evaluate a compromise that allows a limited 17 day period of time for use of firearms at Island Center Forest for the purpose of deer hunting, effectively further limiting the state allowed season of 4 months, which has historically been applicable to Island Center Forest. Extensive public notice and feedback has been received during the last year through the media, public meetings, individual contacts and the SEPA process with general acceptance of this proposal as a fair compromise. Closure of the park to other uses during this period addresses safety concerns. Many responders indicated the limited time period to be worthwhile to increase safety during the rest of the season. There are a significant number of park sites on the island for temporarily displaced uses during this 17 day period.
Concerns were expressed for the safety and risk of allowing the discharge of firearms for the purpose of deer hunting. Concerns were expressed for proximity to homes, increased park use and multiple entries to the park.	The site will be closed to other users during this 17 day period to increase safety. Extra safety measures will be in place. The pilot project will be well publicized and monitored. Hunters will be required to wear orange vests for visibility. Signage will be placed at trailheads and major entry points. Maps will be available that identify site boundaries. Registration will be requested. Adjacent neighbors will be notified and volunteers and staff will be at trailheads on weekends.
This activity is contrary to some county codes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possession and discharge of firearms in park• Discharge of firearms within 500' of structures and trails	<p>This activity is in compliance with codes and state statutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• County Code 7.12.630 allows King County to authorize in writing a special recreation activity.• Island Center Forest is not a traditional park.• The code reference in K.C.C. 12.68.030 to trails is not intended to be applicable to internal trails at Island Center Forest.• Maps identifying park boundaries will be available at all trail heads to orient hunters to areas that are off limits to discharge of firearms. Site boundaries will also be signed.
Some responders suggested the pilot project be delayed or cancelled and hunting be promoted on private lands.	The pilot project is related to the County owned site only and results will be evaluated at the conclusion of the pilot project. Hunting on private land is the responsibility of individual hunters, private property owners and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.
This activity is needed to assist in controlling the deer population on the island.	State Department of Fish and Wildlife staff and many residents have noted that deer overpopulation is a problem on the island. Collisions with cars are an on-going hazard to deer, vehicles and occupants. Without natural predators, the island deer population has become stressed. Deer appear thin and undersized due to limited areas of natural forage. This puts pressure on ecological systems, as well as residential gardens and vegetation. The success of this effort will be evaluated at the conclusion of the pilot project.

